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ABSTRACT

An experiment was conducted using the suggestopedia method to learn German vocabulary words. Four students who had failed, or nearly failed, tests during the regular university term, took part in two tutoring sessions in which the following procedure was used. First, a pretest of 72 lexical items was given. The students cooperated with the teacher in finding items they did not know. This was followed by mental and physical relaxation exercises and a concentration exercise, and the active presentation of a 40-item lesson. The presentation concentrated on the lexical items the students had not known in the pretest. These were presented in various ways to the accompaniment of classical music. The active presentation was followed by more relaxation and concentration exercises. After a 10-minute break, all the items of the lesson were tested; all students showed an increase of vocabulary. A second session, using the same procedure as the first session, took place two days later. A week later a comprehensive end of term test was given. Three of the four students passed; the fourth student passed a test later in the term after some sessions on developing positive mental attitudes. All the students were in favor of the suggestopedic method, feeling happy and successful at learning vocabulary. The vocabulary items tested are attached. (AMH)

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Project: Vocabulary Acquisition - First Year German language students

Three students (A, B, D) had failed two tests during 3rd term, 1 student (C) had barely passed two tests during 3rd term. All four students were very upset over their poor results. Help was offered, provided the students were willing to come to the University on Labor Day (11 Oct.) and again on 13 October. The end of term test was scheduled for 21 October.

Labor Day was chosen for several reasons, e.g. availability of a suitable room in the University, no interruptions, students were motivated enough to break up a long weekend and the students experienced the teacher's motivation as she showed enough interest in the students to break up her long weekend.

I told the students that I was prepared to help them and they would in turn help me by providing research data.

We met for the first time on 11 October at 10 a.m. I explained my project to the students. We discussed their failure/near failure in the last two tests. It appeared that the students found that the vocabulary sections of two chapters of our textbook ("Grundkurs Deutsch", Verlag für Deutsch, München) were too extensive and too difficult; they could not remember the lexical items. I dealt with the problem using the following sequence:

1. Pre-test:
   72 lexical items were given in German. The students had to translate them into English. Then the students helped me find those items that none of them knew.
2. Positive suggestions, e.g. visualize yourself knowing them all, doing well in the next test, etc. Swiss folkmusic was playing in the background as part of the material to be learned came from a chapter that dealt with Carnival in Switzerland.
3. Physical relaxation: tensing of muscles, particularly facial muscles.
4. Concentration exercise: image of walking along the beach by yourself - environmental music, ocean waves.

5. Active presentation: the students received scripts with all the lexical items of the chapter to be learned. 40 items which none of the students had remembered in the pre-test had a red mark. We read those words/phrases trying to create images wherever possible. Then I presented these items with three level voice variations and as much body language as was possible - to Tschaikovsky's Third Piano Concerto.
6. The students got up, stretched, sat down again and closed their eyes. A short concentration exercise followed.
7. Passive presentation of the new material - Handel's "Water Music".
8. Break of 10 minutes.
9. Test: all 40 items were tested, 20 were given in German and had to be translated into English, and 20 were given in English and had to be translated into German.

Results:

Pre-test: 72 items given

A	B	C	D
25/72 = 34.7%	24/72 = 33%	31/72 = 43%	20/72 = 27.7%

Test results:

a) German ⟶ English

A	B	C	D
11/20 = 55%	14/20 = 70%	17/20 = 85%	17/20 = 85%

b) English ⟶ German

A	B	C	D
8/20 = 40%	13/20 = 65%	12/20 = 60%	13/20 = 65%

Total of new items remembered:

A	B	C	D
19/40 = 47.5%	27/40 = 67.5%	29/40 = 72.5%	30/40 = 75%

Total of lexical items learned from respective chapter:

A	B	C	D
44/72 = 61.1%	51/72 = 70.8%	60/72 = 83.3%	50/72 = 69.4%

Increase of vocabulary after 1st suggestopedic session:

A + 26.4%

B + 37.8%

C + 40.3%

D + 41.7%

Our second session took place on 13 Ocotber 1982. We met at 11 a.m. under less favourable conditions, e.g. outside noises, smaller room, students came from a German language class and had other classes to take later in the day.

We used the same procedure as in our first session.

A check of the test results of the first session showed that all four students had failed to translate the following three phrases correctly:

sich abbauen lassen

jemandem fällt etwas ein

Das war doch diese Sache.

We practised these expressions in several sentences, making commands, questions, statements, preceding the active presentation of the not remembered lexical items.

Results:

Pre-test: 84 lexical items given

A	B	C	D
23/84 = 27%	17/84 = 20%	23/84 = 27%	14/84 = 16.6%

We used the same physical relaxation and concentration exercises and the same music for the presentation of the not remembered material as in the previous session. In the test I included the above mentioned three phrases from the first session that we had practised at the beginning of the session. I tested 40 of the 84 items, but this time all had to be translated from German into English.

Test results:

A	B	C	D
31/40 = 77.5%	30/40 = 75%	36/40 = 90%	35/40 = 87.5%

Total of lexical items learned of respective chapter:

A	B	C	D
54/84 = 64%	47/84 = 56%	59/84 = 70%	49/84 = 58%

Increase of vocabulary in this session:

A + 37% B + 36% C + 43% D + 41.4%

All four students got the three previously practised phrases (see above) correct.

Conclusion:

When the students were asked what they thought of these two sessions they were unanimously in favour of the suggestopedic method. Student D commented that they were all very happy and literally skipped and jumped out of the University building, feeling good and happy and successful and for the first time in their lives learning vocab. was not boring.

On 21 October a comprehensive end of term test was given. Student B achieved 64% (high pass), student A 47% (fail), student C 74% (high credit) and student D 71% (credit).

I discussed the results with student A. She told me that she had developed exam anxiety during the third term. We arranged another meeting and then worked together on positive mental attitudes.

On 12 November she sat for a supplementary exam which she passed with 63%. Both suggestopedic sessions, starting with the physical relaxation and ending with the test, lasted approximately one hour each. These may not be spectacular results, but they were impressive enough from the students' point of view that admission to the suggestopedic strand of our intensive first year German course which had already been scheduled for the new academic year as a major research project is sought by many students.

Vokabular: Kapitel 29

* die Neugierde

* Was halten Sie von ihm?

* (3) Viele behaupten, es sei ihnen völlig gleichgültig, was andere über sie dächten.

die Regierung

* erhebliche Summen

von Zeit zu Zeit

das Image eines Landes

sich entwickeln

* Verschlechtert sich das Bild ...

* etwas dagegen tun

dagegen

* die Besichtigungsreise

die Tatsache

* das Vorurteil

* sich abbauen lassen

* Eigentlich sollte sich das ändern.

* (2) Sie informieren sich über ihre Lebensgewohnheiten.

sich informieren über

die Lebensgewohnheiten

aufzählen

* sich kleiden

die Freizeit

länger

* (2) Ihnen würde nicht sehr viel einfallen

jemandem fällt etwas ein.

* allgemein gültig.

* Das trifft für Sie nicht zu.

* die Fußballbegeisterung

bekannt sein für ...

* der erste beste Passart

fragen nach

* wetten, daß ...

die Bundesliga

die Gegend

* die Sitten und Gebräuche

die Lebensform

das Gericht

* nirgendwo anders

weitersagen

der Befragte

* ein hart arbeitendes Volk

* Sie arbeiten am allerwenigsten.

Vokabular: Kapitel 29

der Schweizer
der Holländer
* immerhin einen Tag mehr
* Sie waren wesentlich fleißiger
der Witz
* der Verbesserungsvorschlag
* Er bemüht sich um eine Lösung.
sich bemühen um.
die Lösung
* das Verkehrsproblem
in ganz München
der Radfahrer
* die Droschke
das Lastauto
das Bierfuhrwerk
* der Fußgänger
* überfahren werden
* Das war doch diese Sache
verrückt
* der Verkehrsminister
der automobilfreie Sonntag
* fordern
* sich einsetzen für
radfahren
* energiesparend
* umweltfreundlich

72 lexical items
* 40 lexical items none of the students knew

Vokabular: Kapitel 28

* die Pressemitteilung
* Wo in aller Welt
* die Volksveranstaltung
    durchführen
* sich über drei volle Tage erstrecken
    die Nacht
    ohne Widerspruch
* etwas auf eine Zeit festlegen
* normalerweise
    einmalig
* Jahr für Jahr
* die schweizerische Grenzstadt
    Ende Februar
* Anfang März
    großartig
    darstellen
* am meist kalten Faschingsmontagmorgen
    strömen
* die Bevölkerung
* ganze Familien inklusive Großvater
* (2) aus den äußeren Quartieren zum Stadtzentrum
* die Vorortbahn
    die Eisenbahn
    der Extrakurs
* die Zuschauermenge
* die Turmuhr
    schlagen
    erlöschen
    öffentlich
    die Beleuchtung
* zu Tausenden
    sich drängen
    erwartungsvoll
    freudig
    die Menschenmenge
    das Trottoir
* der Vier-Uhr-Schlag
    gleichzeitig
* ein dumpfes Trommeln
* ein helles Pfeifen
    eröffnen
* die Fasnachtsgesellschaft

Vokabular: Kapitel 28

* sich abbauen lassen
die "jungen Garden"
* sie ziehen durch die engen Straßen
bunt kostümiert
beleuchtet von
stark
* farbig
* wahre Meisterwerke
* der Künstler
die betreffende Clique
* die Gaststätte
hungrig
gefüllt mit
die Mehlsuppe
die Zwiebelwähe
* die Morgendämmerung
seltsam genug
* das Alltagsgesicht
vorwiegend
Ebenfalls an diesem Tage
die Mustermesse
einsetzen
* der schönste Teil der Fasnacht
der Abendbetrieb
verulken
das Ereignis
* drei Tage lang
* das fasnächtliche Fieber
die Stadt ist erfaßt von
* das Spiegelbild
Es ist was los!
* (2) Das gilt für das kleinste Dorf ebenso wie für die größte Stadt.
* der Jahrmarkt
das Weinfest
die Veranstaltung
* teilnehmen an
Das macht mir Spaß.
der Unsinn
* jemandem fällt etwas ein
* das war doch diese Sache

84 lexical items
* 40 lexical items none of the students knew